



## Buried in the Sky: The Extraordinary Story of the Sherpa Climbers on K2's Deadliest Day

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**“Gripping, intense. . . . Buried in the Sky will satisfy anyone who loved [Into Thin Air].”**Kate Tuttle, *Boston Globe*

When Edmund Hillary first conquered Mt. Everest, Sherpa Tenzing Norgay was at his side. Indeed, for as long as Westerners have been climbing the Himalaya, Sherpas have been the unsung heroes in the background. In August 2008, when eleven climbers lost their lives on K2, the world’s most dangerous peak, two Sherpas survived. They had emerged from poverty and political turmoil to become two of the most skillful mountaineers on earth. Based on unprecedented access and interviews, *Buried in the Sky* reveals their astonishing story for the first time.

Peter Zuckerman and Amanda Padoan explore the intersecting lives of Chhiring Dorje Sherpa and Pasang Lama, following them from their villages high in the Himalaya to the slums of Kathmandu, across the glaciers of Pakistan to K2 Base Camp. When disaster strikes in the Death Zone, Chhiring finds Pasang stranded on an ice wall, without an axe, waiting to die. The rescue that follows has become the stuff of mountaineering legend.

At once a gripping, white-knuckled adventure and a rich exploration of Sherpa customs and culture, *Buried in the Sky* re-creates one of the most dramatic catastrophes in alpine history from a fascinating new perspective. 16 pages of illustrations; 8 maps

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### **Editorial Review**

#### **Review**

In 2008, eleven climbers died in one day near the summit of K2. *Buried in the Sky* is one of the very best books on the tragedy. Pacey, compelling and clear, this is an excellent account of what happened that fateful August day. More importantly, it tells the story and reveals the lives of those Himalayan-born high-altitude workers who risked everything for their ambitious employers - some of whom paid the ultimate price. These once anonymous figures leap off the page with all their hopes and fears - and astonishing courage. --Ed Douglas, author of "Tenzing: Hero of Everest"

A well-researched, detailed, and fast-paced narrative of the 2008 disaster that claimed the lives of eleven mountaineers descending from the summit of K2, *Buried in the Sky*, will appeal to every mountaineer (armchair or otherwise) interested in the climbing history of that beautiful and deadly peak. Particularly welcome is Zuckerman and Padoan's focus on the experience and lives of two Sherpa climbers, Chhiring Dorje Sherpa and Pasang Lama, who at the risk of their own lives heroically aided others in getting off the mountain safely, and without whose efforts the death count would likely have been even higher. It is reassuring to know that, even in an age of commercialized hyper-individualism on the world's highest mountains, there are some mountaineers who still live by the values of the brotherhood of the rope.' -- Maurice Isserman, co-author of "Fallen Giants: A History of Himalayan Mountaineering from the Age of Empire to the Age of Extremes"

Through phenomenal research, Zuckerman and Padoan have dug deeper than anyone else into one of the most mysterious tragedies in mountaineering history. Thanks to their efforts, the heroism and humanity of the Sherpa climbers who saved lives shine through the chaos and grief of that awful day on K2. --David Roberts, co-author of "Ks: Life and Death on the World's Most Dangerous Mountain" and author of "On the Ridge Between Life and Death"

I admired *Buried in the Sky* and enjoyed it, too. Because the authors did their homework and wrote their story well, and most of all, because credit is given at long last to those who deserve it most. --Peter Matthiessen, author of "The Snow Leopard"

*Buried in the Sky* isn't just the story of the worst climbing disaster in the history of the "Savage Mountain," but an important introduction to the native climbers from Pakistan, Nepal, and Tibet whose labors make most high-altitude expeditions possible, and whose heroic efforts keep the death tolls on K2, Everest, and other Himalayan peaks from rising even higher. The Sherpas climb off the page and carry a narrative that is as fast and as gripping as their superhuman ascents. --Michael Kodas, author of "High Crimes: The Fate of Everest in an Age of Greed"

[A]n accurate, and riveting, account... a work of obsessive reporting. [The authors] weave a narrative that is hair-raising and moving, but also precise. [W]hat makes their book an indispensable addition to the genre is the way the authors explore the cultural crevasse underlying the ill-fated expeditions on K2. They provide a long-overdue historical correction to the familiar mountaineering story. --Matthew Power

It's a testament to the thrills in this book that I scoured the notes, eager to learn how the authors wrote their account of the 2008 disaster that claimed the lives of 11 people on K2. [T]he authors commendable documentary about the people who carry the gear is overtaken by the chilling adventure story of one terrible

day on the mountain.

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Enthralling... phenomenal research and vivid writing create a memorable portrait not only of the events on the mountain but also of the people who make modern high-altitude climbing possible.

Into Thin Air... was a huge success, and Buried in the Sky will satisfy anyone who loved that book.

Gripping... An absorbing book that goes beyond the typical mountaineering tale. ...This book is mesmerizing.

An informative and inspirational book... I couldn't put it down. I am proud to know of the determination and loyalty of the Sherpa climbers and their tireless efforts to risk their lives for the other climbers. --Jamling Tenzing Norgay, son of Tenzing Norgay, author of "Touching My Father's Soul"

A fast-paced narrative of one of the worst climbing disasters in the history of K2. ... Zuckerman and Padoan offer glimpses into the climbing culture that are as rare as the thin air the climbers breathe in the Death Zone. ...A provocative perspective on one of the world's most expensive and deadly athletic adventures.

Fast-paced and well researched ...a must-read for anyone fascinated by the people and politics of high-altitude mountaineering.

...[T]he authors' commendable documentary about the people who carry the gear is overtaken by the chilling adventure story of one terrible day on the mountain.

[A] revelatory look at Sherpa history and culture.... Highly recommended. --David Pitt

Enthralling phenomenal research and vivid writing create a memorable portrait not only of the events on the mountain but also of the people who make modern high-altitude climbing possible. "

A work of obsessive reporting. The authors (who are cousins) traveled across the world, conducting extensive interviews with nearly every person who was on the mountain in 2008 and using digital forensics to analyze the photographs taken that day. They weave a narrative that is hair-raising and moving, but also precise crucial given the technical complexities of expeditions and the often-hazy recollections of traumatized survivors. But what makes their book an indispensable addition to the genre is the way the authors explore the cultural crevasse underlying the ill-fated expeditions on K2. They provide a long-overdue historical correction to the familiar mountaineering story. --Matthew Power"

[T]he authors' commendable documentary about the people who carry the gear is overtaken by the chilling adventure story of one terrible day on the mountain. "

Gripping An absorbing book that goes beyond the typical mountaineering tale. This book is mesmerizing. "

Although Everest is the tallest mountain on earth, K2, the Savage Mountain, is a more difficult and deadly peak, and this compelling story brought back from its slopes is a worthy tale about a little-known aspect of

these high-stakes climbs. "

The book takes pains to explore their culture and the burden felt by such impoverished young men who take on dangerous work that pays well yet remains an offense to the mountains they revere. Sobering. "

Fast-paced and well researched a must-read for anyone fascinated by the people and politics of high-altitude mountaineering. "

[A] page-turner addition to the library of great mountaineering books. "

[A] revelatory look at Sherpa history and culture . Highly recommended. --David Pitt"

Zuckerman and Padoan have dug deeper than anyone else. Thanks to their efforts, the heroism and humanity of the Sherpa climbers who saved lives shine through the chaos and grief of that awful day on K2. --David Roberts, co-author of *Ks: Life and*"

Pacey, compelling, and clear, this is an excellent account of what happened that fateful August day. The Himalayan-born high-altitude workers leap off the page with all their hopes and fears and astonishing courage. *Buried in the Sky* is one of the very best books on the tragedy. --Ed Douglas, author of *Tenzing: Hero of Ev*"

An informative and inspirational book... I couldn't put it down. I am proud to know of the determination and loyalty of the Sherpa climbers and their tireless efforts to risk their lives for the other climbers. --Jamling Tenzing Norgay, son of Tenzing Norgay, aut"

*Buried in the Sky* reveals the heroic deeds of the Sherpa. . . . [It] brings to light how immensely strong, loyal and talented the Sherpa climbers are. When most other climbers were faltering on the descent from the K-2's summit, the Sherpa climbers not only rescued themselves, but also went back up to rescue others. Finally credit is given, where credit is due. --Ed Viesturs, bestselling author of *No Sho*"

*Buried in the Sky* will appeal to every mountaineer (armchair or otherwise) interested in the climbing history of K2, that beautiful and deadly peak. --Maurice Isserman, co-author of *Fallen G*"

I admired *Buried in the Sky* and enjoyed it, too. ...[T]he authors did their homework and wrote their story well... credit is given at long last to those who deserve it most. --Peter Matthiessen, author of *The Snow Leo*"

*Buried in the Sky* is a gripping account of that fateful day in 2008 when eleven climbers lost their lives on K2. As it unravels the series of events that resulted from the unbridled ambition set loose on a dangerous mountain, it probes deeply into the lives of those courageous and unheralded professionals the thin-air workhorses from Nepal and Pakistan. Heartbreaking. Sober. Compelling. --Bernadette McDonald, author of *Freedom Cl*"

*Buried in the Sky* is a compelling account of the men who have literally shouldered the rest of the world's mountaineers up K2. --Norman Ollestad, bestselling author of *Cr*"

From the Author

Many climbing accounts describe a death-defying struggle up fixedlines. But how did those ropes get there? Who performed the rescues? When your life hangs from a knot, it helps to know who tied it.

But some stories get buried. Western journalists seldom speak Ajak Bhote, Balti, Burushaski, Shar-Khumbu tamgney, Rolwaling Sherpi tamgney, or Wakhi. Reporters can't usually track down indigenous climbers by dialing telephone numbers or sending e-mails, and writers on a deadline rarely have time to trek to remote villages. As a result, testimony from high-altitude workers isn't broadcast far. Survivors of the Death Zone have imperfect recall, and the media maelstrom makes recovery--and accuracy--elusive as families, fans, friends, and publicists all assert claims on a story. Trauma and oxygen deprivation compound the confusion. As in war, eyewitnesses who were standing next to each other sometimes report different versions of the events.

Nonetheless, Amanda and I have tried to get at the truth and to be straightforward about our reporting. We researched for two years. We took seven trips to Nepal, trekking to regions rarely visited by Westerners and off-limits to journalists. We took three trips to Pakistan and obtained unprecedented access to military and government officials, thanks largely to Nazir Sabir, president of the Alpine Club of Pakistan. In total, we interviewed more than two hundred people and spent countless hours at kitchen tables in France, Holland, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Serbia, Spain, Switzerland, and the United States. We relied on more than a thousand photographs and videos. This book re-creates a true story. Please see the background notes for further information on methods and sources.

The death of Amanda's friend Karim Meherban was a catalyst for this book. Nursing a newborn, Amanda couldn't do all the research herself, so I was brought in as coauthor. Amanda and I are cousins, and we've been writing together since I was twelve. Before *Buried in the Sky*, I had a comfortable job as a daily newspaper reporter. I had never strapped on crampons. But when I learned about this story, I had no choice but to quit my job, grab a notebook, and head to the Himalaya. The characters were too inspiring, the goal too important, and the journey too compelling to resist.

Peter Zuckerman  
Portland, Oregon

From the Inside Flap

A cloudless sky greeted the mountaineers when they left for the summit of K2, earth's most dangerous peak. By next morning, eleven men were dead.

The 2008 K2 disaster became an instant media sensation, riveting audiences around the world. But as survivors straggled into Base Camp with their tales of endurance, critical pieces of the story were missing. Men rumored to have three lungs -- the Himalayan-born mountaineers known as Sherpas -- had led the climb and the rescue efforts, but their accounts were hard to come by.

Based on unprecedented access to these high-altitude workers and interviews in their rare and dying languages, *Buried in the Sky* provides a definitive account of K2's deadliest day -- and reveals the Sherpas' story for the first time. More than mere porters, Sherpas were the anonymous heroes of mountaineering decades before Edmund Hillary conquered Everest with Tenzing Norgay at his side. Holding an almost mythical status to many Westerners, theirs is a tale that incorporates thousands of years of history, legend, religion, human physiology and extreme weather.

A white-knuckle adventure, *Buried in the Sky* first transports readers to the Sherpas' remote villages, where climbing not only offers an escape from poverty and war but also represents a sin against the gods. The story then tracks the Sherpas as they leave their homes behind, work their way into becoming some of the best mountaineers in the world, and lead their clients up into the clouds. As the chaos in the Death Zone unfolds, *Buried in the Sky* relives one of the most dramatic catastrophes in alpine history. Life and death at the limit

of human endurance. Triumph and tragedy on a peak so lethal most mountaineers consider it suicide ...

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Florence Wiggins:**

Nowadays reading books be a little more than want or need but also be a life style. This reading routine give you lot of advantages. The advantages you got of course the knowledge your information inside the book which improve your knowledge and information. The info you get based on what kind of publication you read, if you want send more knowledge just go with education books but if you want truly feel happy read one together with theme for entertaining like comic or novel. The particular Buried in the Sky: The Extraordinary Story of the Sherpa Climbers on K2's Deadliest Day is kind of book which is giving the reader erratic experience.

#### **Carrie Correll:**

Hey guys, do you really wants to finds a new book to read? May be the book with the headline Buried in the Sky: The Extraordinary Story of the Sherpa Climbers on K2's Deadliest Day suitable to you? Typically the book was written by renowned writer in this era. The particular book untitled Buried in the Sky: The Extraordinary Story of the Sherpa Climbers on K2's Deadliest Day is the main one of several books that will everyone read now. This particular book was inspired a lot of people in the world. When you read this e-book you will enter the new way of measuring that you ever know just before. The author explained their concept in the simple way, consequently all of people can easily to comprehend the core of this publication. This book will give you a great deal of information about this world now. In order to see the represented of the world in this book.

#### **Lucille Chenier:**

Do you have something that that suits you such as book? The e-book lovers usually prefer to pick book like comic, quick story and the biggest one is novel. Now, why not striving Buried in the Sky: The Extraordinary Story of the Sherpa Climbers on K2's Deadliest Day that give your satisfaction preference will be satisfied by reading this book. Reading addiction all over the world can be said as the opportunity for people to know world better then how they react to the world. It can't be explained constantly that reading behavior only for the geeky individual but for all of you who wants to possibly be success person. So , for all of you who want to start examining as your good habit, you could pick Buried in the Sky: The Extraordinary Story of the Sherpa Climbers on K2's Deadliest Day become your own starter.

#### **Wanda Collins:**

Reading a book to get new life style in this year; every people loves to learn a book. When you examine a book you can get a lot of benefit. When you read publications, you can improve your knowledge, due to the fact book has a lot of information upon it. The information that you will get depend on what types of book that you have read. If you want to get information about your analysis, you can read education books, but if



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